

dredges (Thayer et al. 1984). Prop scarring occurs when outboard vessels travel through water shallower than the draft of the boat. The boat prop cuts leaves, roots, and stems as well as creates a narrow trench through the sediment (Street et al. 2005). Prop scarring has severely damaged seagrass beds in Florida and is an increasing problem in Chesapeake Bay. In both areas, increasing occurrences of prop scarring are associated with increasing human populations and an increasing number of registered vessels. Aerial observations of high salinity grass beds seem to indicate that damage to SAV from prop scarring is not currently a significant problem in North Carolina. However, as human populations along the coast increases, it is also expected that number of boats will increase (Street et al. 2005).

III. DISCUSSION

The area that is fished for bay scallops consists of approximately 46,000 acres of mapped SAV in eastern Pamlico, Core, Back and Bogue sounds (Street et al. 2005). Bay scallop landings from these areas have been variable for the past several years, ranging from 201,000 lbs. in 1995 to 0 in 2005. The number of scallop dredging trips has also declined from 1995 to 2005 (Table 9.2). Bay scallop dredges accounted for 86% of landings from 1972 to 1986 before red tide decimated the fishery in 1987. From 1987 to 2005, dredging still made up over 75% of landings and remains an important gear in the fishery.

No scallop dredging was allowed in Bogue Sound from 1993 to 1997. Beginning in 2000, dredging has been delayed in both Bogue Sound and Core Sound until later in the season after scallops have been harvested out of the shallow areas. No mechanical harvest occurred in 2001.

Table 9.2. Number of scallop dredge trips and bushels landed from 1995 to 2005. DMF Trip Ticket Program.

Year	Trips	Bushels
1995	1,752	31,847
1996	264	4,052
1997	357	7,850
1998	896	18,838
1999	146	2,235
2000	10	128
2001	0	-
2002	27	283
2003	23	438
2004	0	0
2005	0	0

In recent years, to reduce SAV impacts from prop scarring, that occur with bay scallop dredging, DMF allows hand harvest methods for bay scallops early in the season, followed by a proclamation to open scallop dredging later on a rising or high tide. This